

General Plan Update
Interest Group Meeting
November 15, 2007

Interest Group Committee:

Bruce Tabb	Environmental Development
Wallace Tucker	SD Coalition for Transportation Choices
Liz Higgins	SD Association of Realtors
Dan Silver	Endangered Habitats League
Dave Shibley	Save Our Land Values
Karen Messer	Buena Vista Audubon Society
Al Stehly	Farm Bureau
Brooke Peterson	American Planning Association
Diane Coombs	Citizen Coordinate for Century 3
Phil Pryde	San Diego Audubon
Tracy Morgan Hollingworth	American Society of Landscape Architects

Public at Large:

Barry Fowler	Fauntlerey, LLC
Aaron Brownwood	T & B Planning
Bob Smith	Pine Valley Community Planning Group
Mehdi Khalili	Site Design Associates
Bud Gray	
Lael Montgomery	VC Planning
Rich Rudolf	VC Trails Association
Ron White	White Family Properties, LLC
Brice Bossler	
Bill Darnell	Darnell & Associates Inc.
J.S McIntyre	

County Staff:

Eric Gibson(DPLU)
Jeff Murphy(DPLU)
Devon Muto (DPLU)
LeAnn Carmichael(DPLU)
Stephanie Gaines (DPLU)
Jimmy Wong(DPLU)
Eric Lardy(DPLU)
Erik Torkelson(DPLU)
Claudia Anzures(County Counsel)

Introductions:

Mr. Gibson introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the current status of the General Plan Update. He explained that a Management audit had been conducted by Tony Lettieri, a local consultant on General Plans, to gain an assessment of where the General Plan stood. Mr. Gibson explained that the focus of the audit was not to change the General Plan fundamentally but instead to focus on Mr. Lettieri's recommendations on how to get the General Plan to completion. Mr. Gibson stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to present the findings and recommendations from the Management Audit.

Mr. Gibson explained that the first recommendation that Mr. Lettieri made was regarding organizational changes. He had recommended appointing a project manager who's primary focus would be the General Plan, unlike the previous manager who was in charge of not only GP2020, but other areas of DPLU.

Mr. Gibson then introduced Mr. Muto.

General Plan Update:

Mr. Muto began with emphasizing that the County remains committed to the General Plan update and that the direction of the project has not been altered, but instead the overall process has changed.

Mr. Muto stated that based on the comprehensive review performed by Mr. Lettieri, the project was behind in regards to schedule and also the level of completeness of the documents. Some of the reasons for the delay of the project were due to the high level of detail on the Land Use map, scope creep, and the lack of a full time manager.

Mr. Muto also noted that Mr. Lettieri identified that the project lacked experience with completing a California General Plan, and recommended retaining a consultant with local California General Plan experience and also experience with programmatic environmental impact reports.

Mr. Muto further explained that it was important to identify the critical path for the project and to create a detailed work plan.

Mr. Muto stated that based on Mr. Lettieri's review and analysis of the General Plan update the estimated time for having a prepared document completed for Board of Supervisor consideration will take 3 years.

Mr. Muto went on to give an overview of what DPLU is doing with the recommendations from Mr. Lettieri. (Refer to Below)

- Planning and Land Use department has hired Devon Muto as the General Plan update Project Manager
- The County is currently negotiating a contract with PMC, a planning firm known for their urban and rural general plan experience. The County anticipates that the consultant will be on board by the end of the year.
- Once a complete detailed work plan is prepared, the County will identify the critical milestones and convey them to the proper interested parties to ensure that the County remains on schedule.
- The County has developed a internal Management Review Team
- The County has developed a interdepartmental review team
- Begin re-engaging the stake Stakeholders, interest groups, and communities

Mr. Muto explained that based on the comprehensive review the estimated 3 years is a reasonable time period.

Mr. Muto also stated that there will be staff changes due to the majority of the remaining work will be preformed by the new consultant. Current general plan update staff will be transferred to different areas of the department. Mr. Muto explained that previous general plan community contacts will no longer be the same, and he recommended that if there were any questions regarding the general plan update to contact him directly to ensure that the question is answered appropriately. Furthermore Mr. Muto clarified that general questions regarding zoning, basic general plan questions, and specific planning projects should be directed to the appropriate regulatory planner or the zoning counter.

Mr. Muto introduced the draft technical reviewer handout and explained that a technical review team is critical to ensure that the appropriate technical data in the documents is correct.

Mr. Muto stated that in preparing the preliminary work plan it was apparent that the critical path involved identifying the range of alternatives that are to be evaluated in the environmental impact report. Mr. Muto explained that the mapping alternatives require extensive time to perform detailed analysis, gather supporting information, and to complete the appropriate modeling. Mr. Muto explained that currently there are two map alternatives, the Board Map, and the draft land use map, both of which already have been endorsed by the board. Mr. Muto clarified that the County will be adding a minimum of two maps; a hybrid map and an environmentally preferred alternative to establish a reasonable range of alternatives for CEQA. Mr. Muto stated that the two additional maps are currently being prepared and will be presented beginning of 2008.

Mr. Muto introduced the handout titled "External technical reviewers". He stated that the purpose of the technical review is to have more information available on the complex issues that will be necessary for the implementation phase. Furthermore Mr. Muto asked

that if there was any reviewer that should be added or removed from the list to please notify staff.

Mr. Muto ended the presentation portion of the meeting with stating that the County would like to establish more frequent meetings with the Interest Group either quarterly or every month. He asked for input from the Interest Group in regards to time and location.

Mr. Muto stated that future Interest Group meeting topics will include Conservation subdivisions, the Land Use element, and Map alternatives.

Mr. Muto also stated that staff will be going out to the communities beginning in January 2008 to discuss the following topics:

- Village boundaries and Rural Village boundaries
- Housing map changes by staff due to State Housing Mandates
- Minor map changes: mapping corrections or refinements
- Potential boundary changes
- Other discussion topics: General overview, regional element process, roles of advisory groups, technical working groups, land use map alternatives, consultant roles, and new staff contacts.

Mr. Muto stated that there is a new updated version of the frequently asked questions (FAQs) that is available on the General Plan Update website.

Committee Comment:

Mr. Pryde asked for clarification on the potential boundary changes and if they dealt with changes to regional categories. Mr. Muto answered that it was not in regards to the categories but instead the boundaries to the community planning areas.

Ms. Coombs asked two questions. Her first question was regarding how the County will be addressing the important topic of water availability. Her second question was in regards to how the County was going to cope with the issue of global climate change. Mr. Muto answered by stating that the County will have expert technical reviewers with experience in water resources to ensure that the topic is covered thoroughly. Furthermore Mr. Muto addressed the question regarding global climate change by stating that the County is currently reviewing other General Plans to see how other jurisdictions are handling this topic. Mr. Muto also stated that the County will perform a comprehensive review of the elements that have been prepared to ensure that they have properly covered the topic of Global Climate Change.

Mr. Shibley asked if the county will be accepting General Plan Amendments between now and 2010. Mr. Gibson answered by stating that the County continues to have a process of authorizing general plan amendments. Mr. Gibson explained that proposals that are not in conformance with the Draft Land Use maps will be looked down upon.

Mr. Shibley asked a second question regarding what the County of San Diego considers to be a pipelining project. Mr. Muto answered that a pipelining project is a complete application filed with the County of San Diego prior to the cut off date in 2003. Mr. Muto clarified that a completed application requires that all the mandatory requirements be fulfilled.

Ms. Higgins asked if Mr. Muto could give some background information on his past. Mr. Muto answered by stating he was born and raised in San Diego. Mr. Muto said that he attended UC Berkeley where he earned a degree in conservation and resource studies. Mr. Muto stated that he initially worked in the private sector primarily working on environmental planning. Mr. Muto has worked on projects such as Petco Park, the San Diego Zoo expansion, a large power plant in Southern Nevada, the long range plan for UCSD, and a water quality program from Oceanside. Mr. Muto then came to county as a regulatory planner for two years where he worked on various regulatory planning projects.

Ms. Higgins asked what the current status of the environmental subdivision was. Mr. Muto answered that the County is currently reviewing the information that has been prepared over the past 4 years. Mr. Muto explained that he wants to ensure that the documents are properly reviewed by staff internally, and then by the stakeholders. Mr. Muto further clarified that documents are currently not ready for review.

Mr. Tucker stressed the importance of water availability and he hopes that planners will take a proactive role in ensuring that the issue of water resources is addressed. Mr. Tucker followed up with a second question regarding equity issues and how the County was going to deal with the issue of up zoning and down zoning of areas. Mr. Tucker also inquired about the transferring of development rights and purchasing of development rights programs. Mr. Muto answered by stating that the Board of Supervisors did pass a policy of legislative intent regarding the purchase of development rights. Mr. Muto clarified that the transferring of developments rights was no longer an option, and that the county will be focusing on the purchase of development rights and how it relates to agricultural land.

Mr. Silver asked if town center planning was still going to be in the General Plan. Mr. Muto answered that the County has identified that town center planning is part of the overall project, and the County will work with the consultant to see what available resources they have to complete the task. Mr. Muto also stated that town center planning has been identified as a major priority and is important to get started as soon as possible.

Mr. Shibley said that he hopes the previous work with the communities is not wasted. Mr. Muto answered that the county intends to use the information already gathered from the communities and not to recreate more work.

Mr. Shibley asked if the project was still going to be called GP2020. Mr. Muto answered that the name general plan update is more applicable to the project and will be used from this point on.

Mr. Tabb asked what the status of reconciling the staff map versus board map. Mr. Muto answered that the two current maps have established 2 points of review, and CEQA requires a reasonable range of alternatives which is why the County is in the process of creating a hybrid map and an environmentally preferred map. Mr. Muto further clarified that CEQA requires the most impactful project undergo the environmental review process which at this point he believes is the Board map.

Ms. Hollingworth inquired about community plans, and also stated that she believed that a meeting between the interest group and steering committee should be arranged to better help the process.

Ms. Peterson asked what was the intent of the community plans and how will they be addressed in the General Plan update.

Mr. Muto stated that finishing the community plans is going to depend on the availability of the consultant. Mr. Muto also said that the County would like to start the community plans as soon as possible and that the County remains committed to getting them updated.

Mr. Shibley stated that attitudes in communities have changed and housing prices have made people more receptive to ideas like town center planning. Mr. Shibley also said that he hopes that when he goes back to the communities they will be more receptive to better planning practices.

Ms. Messer asked about the technical working groups regarding their role and how they were selected. Mr. Muto answered that the technical review list was developed originally from the County's business process re-engineering program for the regulatory division of DPLU. Mr. Muto explained that the groups had been refined from larger committees by identifying participants who were most constant and could commit the most time. Mr. Muto also stated that the purpose of the technical working groups is to provide a focus review on specific topics and to get a technical response.

Ms. Coombs stressed the importance needing more safety technical reviewers due to the recent wildfires in the County. Mr. Murphy answered by stating the County has made amendments after the cedar fire in regards to fire standards. Mr. Murphy further explained that preliminary findings from the analysis of the recent fire show that the previous building codes and amendments did make a positive impact.

Mr. Pryde asked if there was anything being done to get 1 set of fire regulations for the entire County. Mr. Murphy answered that the County has worked with the fire districts and have completed an updated consolidated fire code which was adopted last May which should clarify the requirements County wide.

Ms. Higgins asked what effect the population projections will have on the elements such as the Housing element. Mr. Muto answered that the proposed general plan accommodates the current projections, but the County will continue to monitor future

data. Mr. Muto explained that the general plan will only be valid for a certain time period and at sometime it will need to be updated when it is no longer relevant.

Ms. Messer asked why there were only 2 biological technical reviewers. Mr. Muto stated that if anyone was interested in participating or knows anyone who would like to participate to please contact staff.

Public Comment:

Mr. White stated that he was pleased to hear that staff will be going out to the communities again. Mr. White requested that the County reconsider some of the past decisions on the referrals. Mr. Muto gave a general response that different alternative maps will provide more options for consideration.

Ms. Montgomery asked if the community plans will be part of the general plan update. Mr. Muto explained that the community plans will be part of the overall project, but as to when the plans will be completed exactly is difficult to say. Mr. Muto clarified that the timing of the community plans will be heavily based on the availability of the consultant.

Ms. Montgomery followed up by asking if it is a possibility that the community plans will be part of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Muto answered that the County is still looking at that as a possibility.

Ms. Radzik asked for clarification regarding why some community boundary changes will not be included. Mr. Muto stated that the County may exclude a change depending on staff's ability to build consensus on the area.

Ms. Radzik stated that in Ramona they are working towards working with other special interest groups so that their group's decisions are not circumvented. Ms. Radzik also re-emphasized the importance of water. Furthermore Ms. Radzik supported the idea of scheduling a joint Interest Group and Steering Committee meetings to help alleviate what she believes to be a fractured process.

Mr. Smith stated that the backcountry has two major problems which are fire and water. Mr. Smith also emphasized that ground water in the backcountry needs to be protected.

Mr. Gibson thanked the group for their feed back and stated that the County of San Diego remains committed to finishing the project on time.

Mr. Muto stated that they expect to schedule another Interest Group meeting again in January 2008.